



PATRON PREVIEW

The library is not just a building. It's so much more than a space to hold books. It's a gathering place!

~Michelle Spiker, Shorewood-Troy Public Library patron



Shorewood resident Michelle Spiker has been a library patron since 2006 – the summer after she moved to the village. Then a full time English teacher, Spiker said she has fond memories of coming to the library to grade papers in a quiet place where she could look out the windows at the beautiful scenery. While she wasn't able to bring her children as much as she wanted when she was still working, she has more than made up for it since staying home full time with them.

An every other week visit became two to three visits per week when her kids were little, especially when she was watching other children and wanted local outings. Now the family is comfortably settled in a weekly schedule.

“Since 2011 we always have a bag of library books in our house,” she said. “My kids have a love for reading and an appreciation of books. Coming to the library, picking out books and checking out books is part of their routine,” she explained.

However, the library provides more than just books; it has created a sense of community for her family.

“We’ve met some really good friends here,” Spiker shared. “When we got to school and into sports and Girl Scouts and other activities, there were familiar faces.”

And not just for the kids. “I met one of my closest friends in Shorewood at preschool story times at the library, and she and other moms that frequent the library have become a part of our family’s local support system,” she added.

While the library has created a sense of community for Spiker and her family, she also appreciates how the library is out in the community. Her kids love seeing STPLD Outreach Librarian Ms. Mara on her regular visits to their school. They also love seeing their librarians at the Party in the Park and the story times that were held in the park.

Spiker also appreciates the ability of the library to adapt.

“I think there are more after school programs now than there were 10 years ago when I was working and couldn’t bring my kids for daytime programs,” she explained.

Her children have also loved the new addition of the Makerspace and the tablets, and she loves how the Children’s Department coordinates with the local schools and has genre books on the shelves for school projects. In addition, her oldest daughter, Mia, participates in the Subscription Book Boxes (a librarian-selected book based on patron interests), as well as the Automatically Yours automatic holds program.

“She gets very excited to read her favorite authors’ new releases,” Spiker said.

Yet for all that she loves the outreach connections and expanded programming, seasonal traditions remain important to the Spiker family, who regularly attend the library’s holiday story times, the holiday crafts, Santa’s visit, the egg hunt and the Easter Bunny’s visit.

“It’s a nice way to not spend money and embrace the holidays in the community,” Spiker said.

The summer reading program is always a must in their house, too.

“We’ve enjoyed the kick-off parties (the kids loved when the ice cream truck came), special programs (especially learning about animals), Harry Potter Day and the scavenger hunt around Shorewood,” she shared.

And speaking of reading, Spiker offered a list of family favorites:

Mia (4th Grade) and Grant (2nd Grade) both love graphic novels, including Dave Pilkey’s books—*Dog Man* and the *Captain Underpants* series. Grant also liked *Plants vs. Zombies*.

Mia’s favorites include: Dana Simpson’s *Phoebe and the Unicorn* series, Raina Telgemeier’s adaptation of *The Babysitter’s Club*, Nick Bruel’s *Bad Kitty* novels and Louis Sachar’s *Wayside School* books.

Also recommended for early elementary: the *Clementine* series, *Ivy & Bean* series and the *Dory Fantasmagory* books by Abby Hanlon (to read to kindergarteners).

English teacher Michelle said it was so hard to choose just a few books to recommend. Her list includes:

- Nonfiction and memoir – *Dopesick: Dealer, Doctors and the Drug Company that Addicted America* by Beth Macy; *Educated* by Tara Westover; *The Sound of Gravel* by Ruth Wariner; *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond; *Tell Me More* by Kelly Corrigan; *Calypso* by David Sedaris; *Present Over Perfect* by Shauna Niequist; *How to Raise an Adult: Break Free of the Overparenting Trap and Prepare Your Kid for Success* by Julie Lythcott-Haims
- Fiction – *The Great Believers* by Rebecca Makkai; *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah; *The Heart's Invisible Furies* by John Boyne; *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens; *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman; *Where'd You Go Bernadette* by Maria Semple; *Rules of Civility* by Amor Towles; *The Castle of Water* by Dane Huckelbridge; *This Is How It Always Is* by Laurie Frankel; *The Sea of Tranquility* by Katja Millay; *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr; *The Rosie Project* by Graeme Simsion; *The Prince of Tides* by Pat Conroy; *She's Come Undone* by Wally Lamb
- Favorite Classics – *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley